

## DISPATCH

CLASSIFICATION

SEARCH SYMBOL AND NO.

CONFIDENTIAL

EGMA-20379

TO INFO	Chief, NE Chief of Base, Frankfurt, Berlin, Munich, Hamburg	HEADQUARTERS FILE NO. Not Known 32 W-124-26/3 FF: CAMISE
FROM	Chief of Base, Bonn	DATE 3 January 1961
SUBJECT	Operational/CADORY/CALM Membership of German Press Club in Bonn	REF "33-F" - (CHECK IF ONE) <input type="checkbox"/> MARKED FOR INDEXING <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO EXEMPTION REQUIRED
ACTION REQUIRED	P.Y.I	INDEXING CAN BE JUDGED BY QUALIFIED HQ DESK ONLY

REFERENCE: EGMA-20317, dated 20 December 1960

1. During the deliberating covered by reference dispatch, CAMISE advised us concerning the exclusive nature of the membership list of the German Press Club in Bonn. Since we (and others here at the Embassy) had always assumed this membership to include all German correspondents accredited to Bonn, and since the exclusive nature of the membership list is of some importance in evaluating the information which members of the Press Club occasionally make available to us, it is believed desirable that CAMISE's advice be made a matter of record.

2. According to CAMISE, the German Press Club in Bonn (Deutscher Presseclub e.V., located at Koblenzerstrasse 95, Telephone: 21456, 25347, 25348) was founded by five charter members, of whom CAMISE was one. These five charter members each recruited five additional members, expanding the first membership to thirty. The original charter stated that new members were to be chosen by open majority vote. This system, however, soon allowed too many "unwanted" journalists to become members, because the open voting made it too embarrassing for members to vote down candidates for membership. Some years ago, therefore, the by-laws were changed, and members are now only admitted if they receive a clear majority in a secret ballot. Over the years, this has reduced the membership to its current standing of about seventy (as compared with the estimated minimum of about 250 journalists of one kind or another who are accredited in Bonn). Significantly enough, according to CAMISE, the present membership does not include any East German correspondents (who, because of their citizenship, are eligible in principle), any correspondents from Der Spiegel (most of whose correspondents used to be members), or any journalists who are in one way or another associated with the numerous so-called "confidential" press services and press-concerning "special information" sheets.

3. According to CAMISE, this exclusive or restricted membership has had a two-fold effect in recent years: (a) confidential information given to members of the Press Club in background briefings, or information which becomes available to Press Club members during social occasions with high-ranking government and party officials, even though it does not usually remain secret, has never appeared in print with attribution, and this, in turn, has led to (b) that such background briefings and informal but informative social get-togethers between the Press Club and government and party officials have steadily increased in both frequency and informational significance.

4. Fortunately, a good many of the press contacts maintained by Bonn bases are also members of the Press Club. This should be kept in mind when attempting to evaluate information made available to us by these correspondents. Consequently, whenever the circumstances make this applicable, we will in the future cite the fact that the information was obtained by a source with access to confidential background briefings.

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